

# Network Tele-Seminar

## Introduction to the BWC Network and the National Standard of Excellence

*Tele-Seminars provide valuable information to help Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> Network members grow their own commuter programs and promote the Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> brand. Moderated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), these seminars feature experts on key topic areas.*

### Opening Remarks

On November 3, 2004, Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> held a Tele-Seminar to welcome new members to the Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> Network and to introduce and explain the National Standard of Excellence. Patty Klavon, EPA's national Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> Network manager, began the discussion by introducing the Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> (BWC) Network.

### Introduction to the Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> Network

#### About the BWC Network

Provides consistent, high-quality information and resources to supporters of the Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> program.

Nearly 200 organizations working together to transform the marketplace to make commuter benefits a common part of employee benefits packages.

Members include transportation management associations (TMAs); federal, state, and local governments; transit organizations; metropolitan planning organizations; human resources groups; environmental groups; private sector businesses; universities; and private individuals.

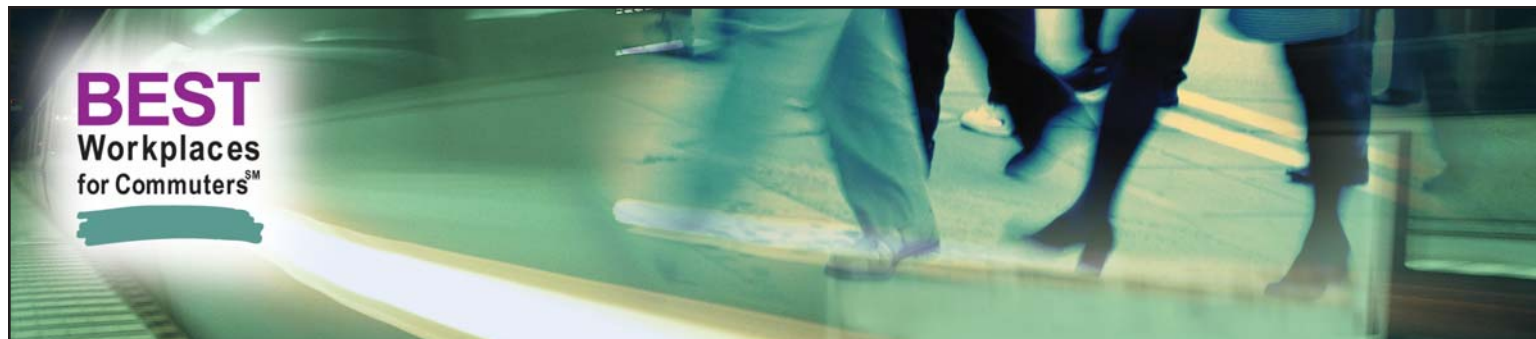
Members use the tools provided by Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> to promote commuter benefits.

### BWC Network Tools & Resources

- Bimonthly online newsletter.
- PowerPoint<sup>TM</sup> marketing presentation.
- 2003 Media Results Flyer.
- Online Newsroom <[www.bwc.gov/media/](http://www.bwc.gov/media/)>.
- PDF of the Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> online application <[www.bwc.gov/suppor/promo.htm](http://www.bwc.gov/suppor/promo.htm)>.
- Tools & Resources fact sheet.
- Emergency Ride Home Toolkit <[www.ergweb.com/projects/ccli/erhkit/](http://www.ergweb.com/projects/ccli/erhkit/)>.
- Other resources available at the request of BWC Network members.

### Tele-Seminars

- Bimonthly teleconferences on issues important to BWC Network members, such as:
  - Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> Districts.
  - Innovative funding sources for transportation demand management (TDM) programs.
  - Creating attention-grabbing advertisements and public service announcements.



### Commuter Benefits Training Course

- One-day training course to educate employers on the implementation of commuter benefits.
- Co-sponsored by BWC Network members.
- Good for metro areas with few employers offering commuter benefits.

### Social Marketing Training

- 1- or 2-day training course to educate BWC Network members about effective marketing strategies.

### Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> Campaigns

- Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> is modeled after Fortune Magazine's list of "Best 100 Companies to Work For" and other "Best of" lists.
- Inclusion on a "Best of" list can help employers attract, hire, and retain employees.
- Campaigns encourage employers to offer commuter benefits and make the Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> list, as well as raise community awareness of the traffic-reduction efforts of TMAs, local governments, and other organizations.

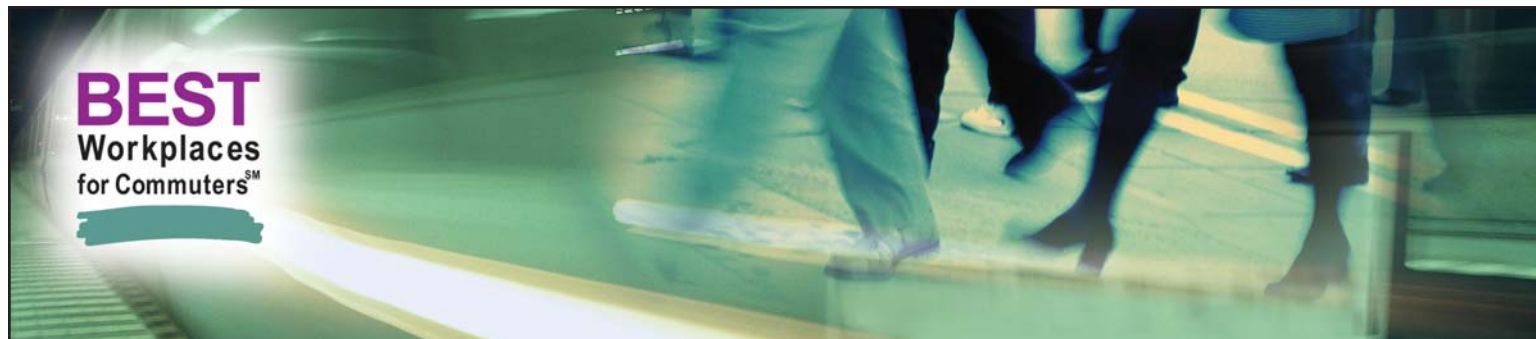
### Ways for Network Members to Get Involved:

- Talk to employers in their communities about Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup>.
- Publish articles in newsletters.
- Speak in BWC Network Tele-seminars.
- Sign up for the BWC Network at [www.bwc.gov/support/index.htm](http://www.bwc.gov/support/index.htm).

### Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> National Standard of Excellence

Requirements of the *National Standard of Excellence*

- To qualify as one of the Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup>, an employer must:
  - Appoint a person to serve as a contact for the program.
  - Centralize information about commuting benefits options.
  - Promote commuter benefits to employees.
  - Provide access to an emergency ride home system.
  - Provide one primary benefit:
    - Transit or vanpool subsidy of at least \$30 per month.
    - Cash instead of free parking; at least 75 percent of the actual saved parking costs.
    - Telework program reducing commuting trips by at least 6 percent.
    - Alternative proposal agreed upon by the Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> team (see below).
  - Provide three secondary benefits:
    - Onsite daycare.
    - Bike lockers and showers.
    - Commuting awards programs.
    - Other benefits that encourage employees to use alternative modes of transportation.
  - Reach and maintain a 14 percent rate of employees not driving to work alone within 18 months of acceptance to the list.
  - Share commuter benefits program progress with EPA and participate in random employee surveys administered by the Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> team.



- An approved alternative primary benefit proposal will:
  - Reduce single-occupant-vehicle commuting by as much or more than standard primary benefits.
  - Be seen as a valuable benefit by employees, comparable to a \$30 per month subsidy.
  - Have a significant rate of participation.

### Employers' Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> Benefits

- Positive press coverage.
- Exclusive rights for use of the Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> logo.
- Networking opportunities with their peers.
- Access to experts in the field of commuter benefits.
- Access to the online Members-Only Toolkit.
- Invitations to phone forums—teleconferences on implementing commuter benefits.

### Questions and Answers

- Q:** How quickly are employers notified if they have been accepted onto the Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> list?
- A:** Employers receive a phone call from a Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> account manager within a week of the application submission to verify that they meet the criteria. If the employer submits an alternative primary option proposal, the process can take longer, as more data is often requested.

**Q:** What is considered a “significant” participation rate for alternative primary benefit proposals?

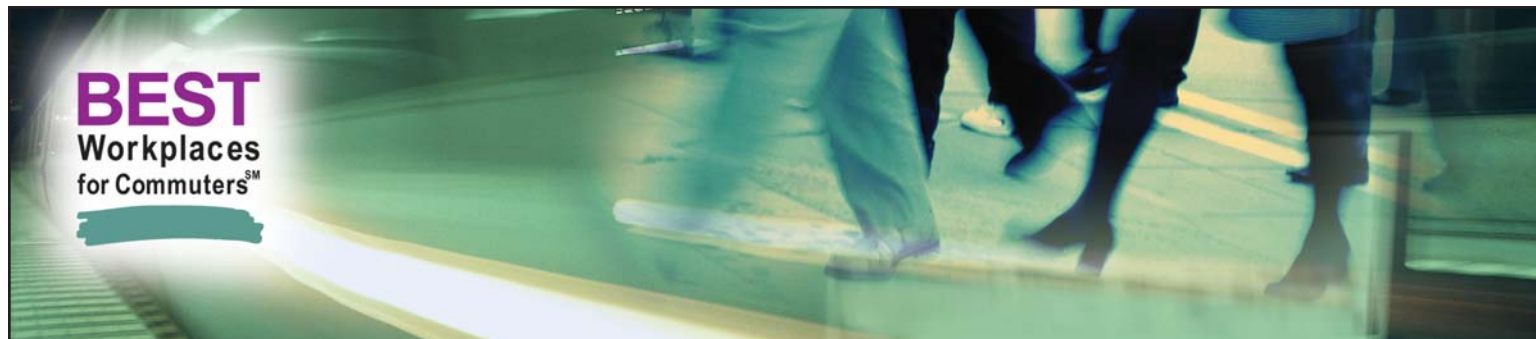
**A:** Because alternative primary benefit proposals are particularly varied, there is no specific figure for a “significant” participation rate. The Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> team requires at least a 14 percent participation rate for the primary benefit proposal to be considered.

**Q:** Employers in some areas have commuting programs with many features. Should all of those features be included in the application?

**A:** When submitting an alternative proposal online, employers should include all features of their commuter benefits program, even if they consider some of those benefits to be inconsequential.

**Q:** What is the intensity of the Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> social marketing training courses like?

**A:** The length and depth of the training courses varies, depending on the availability of the instructors and participants in the course. They range from half-day to two-day courses and are focused on the needs of BWC Network members in different locations and facing specific obstacles. To show your interest in attending one of these seminars, please send an email to <bwc@epa.gov>.



**Q:** What about giving recognition to employers that, while they don't provide a transit subsidy to employees, allow employees to purchase transit passes with pre-tax dollars?

**A:** It was decided that Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> would only recognize employers who make significant monetary contributions to change the commuting behavior of their employees. Allowing employees to pay for transit passes with pre-tax dollars does not constitute an employer's significant monetary contribution equivalent to \$30 per month per employee, and so does not qualify as a primary benefit under the National Standard of Excellence.

**Q:** What communications do employers who are recognized as Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> receive from the Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> team?

**A:** Every employer who qualifies for the list will receive invitations to participate in monthly Phone Forums as well as receive E-Updates, the Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> monthly newsletter. Each employer also has a personal account manager to contact with any questions about the program.

**Q:** How can employers from Canada be involved in the program?

**A:** At this point, Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> provides recognition only for employers in the United States.

**Q:** What kind of tracking does the employer's point of contact need to implement to provide acceptable participation figures to Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup>?

**A:** There are different means for tracking employee commuting behavior. Although the 14 percent participation rate is self-reported, the employer contact should have a system in place that allows the contact to estimate employee participation with reasonable accuracy.

## Closing

Ms. Klavon concluded by asking for feedback at <[www.bwc.gov](http://www.bwc.gov)> and encouraging Network members to participate in the next seminar. She thanked everyone for participating in the Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> Network.

If you have questions for any of the speakers, please refer to the contact information below:

- Patty Klavon: [klavon.patty@epa.gov](mailto:klavon.patty@epa.gov), (734) 214-4476
- Mary Walsh: [walsh.mary@epa.gov](mailto:walsh.mary@epa.gov), (734) 214-4205